
Title: Tales of Virtue: Honor (Part 1)

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Honor: Dupre and the
Gargoyles

I am sure you know
that the Gargoyle folk
joined Britannian
society after the
restoration of the

Codex of Ultimate
Wisdom. I'm also sure
it will not surprise
you to hear that the
treaty between Lord
British and
Draxinuson, King of
the Gargoyles, did not

instantly bring accord
to the two races.
Certain ignorant
humans continued to
hate and fear
Gargoyles, and certain
intractable Gargoyles
continued to regard

humanity with
enraged contempt. The
most notorious
Gargoyle fighter
against mankind in
those days was named
Gartagmalem. He was
equally renowned

among his people for
his keen intellect as
for his fierce
disposition and when
peace was achieved
between the races he
turned outlaw with a
small band of

likeminded Gargoyle
bravos. This fierce

troops devoted
themselves to burning
and pillaging the
remote crofts and
farms of the land,
stopping short only at
outright murder of
unresisting enemies.
Nonetheless, they
were the cause of
much suffering, loss,
and deprivation to
their victims.

Now there was a
certain inn, located
midway between
Britain and Yew, and
famous for its
excellent autumn ale. So
good was the brew that
many fine folk were
given to retire for that
place for a fortnight's
holiday when the new
casks were breached.
Tents had to be pitched
on the grounds to hold
all the guests, and for
two weeks each fall
the place took on the
air of a faire or
festival.

It was during this
time that Gartagmalem
chose to attack that
inn, and he and his
band flew down
during the late
afternoon,
surrounding the place
and quickly
dispatching the few
hired guards. And
they mockingly
ordered all the
humans to leave
forthwith, or see the
whole place burned
around their heads.

At this, one lone
festiva-goer stepped
out from the crowd,
wearing the clothes of
a gentleman, but
gripping the sword of

a knight. And he spoke, saying "I am Dupre, Knight and Paladin, and I call on you to case this unlawful incursion, and to surrender in the name of Lord British."

but Gartagmalem only laughed, saying "Of all the names of man or Gargoyle to confure with, that one is the least likely to inspire fear in my heart. I reject your demand for surrender."

(Now I confess that those were not the very words he used, but Gargoyles speak in their own peciular fashion, and I will not try to mimic the intricacies of that speech in this tale).

Dupre reorted. "Then let us settle this honorably. I shall face you or any of your troops in single combat, with the winner to determine the fate of this inn."

The Gargoyle laughed again at the human's audacity, but when he spoke, he said, "Very good, then, man, your proposal intrigues me. You shall face three of my brothers, and if you defeat all three, I shall leave this place standing, asking only a suitable forfeit in return for my generosity."

Then Gartagmalem named his three champions. The first was a great brute

almost 10 feet tall,
wielding a mace of
solid iron, and the
second was a young
champion of the
Gargoyles, wielding a
sword nearly as long
as Dupre was tall. The
third was
Gartagmalem's chief
lieutenant, who fought
with two great-bladed
axes, one in each
hand.

But Dupre was a
veteran of many
battles against
dragons, daemons and
giants... aye, and
Gargoyles as well, and
he did not fear the
size or fierceness of
these foes. One by one
they engaged, and the
first two he cast down
with severe wounds,
while the third he
killed outright.

The loss seemed to
amuse Gartagmalem
more, and when the
last Gargoyle was
dragged from the
field, he announced, "I
shall honor my word,
oh man, but first I
must see my forfeit
paid. And my price is
you, Sir Knight."

"I will gladly give my
life for the safety of
these people," Dupre
replied, "though you
may find the
collecting of it more
costly still."

"Nay," said the
Gargoyle, "I have no
use for your head, but
rather your arm.
Today you have cost
me a lieutenant, and I
demand that you shall
take his place. You

shlal join my
company, and teach us
your ways of battle."

"I will never take up
arms against my king
or his people," Dupre
replied, hotly.

"I would not ask it,"
the Gargoyle said with
mocking gentleness.

"You will come and
train my company,
and when I order them
back into battle you
may be excused if
only you give the word
to do nothing to resist
or hinder our
efforts."

Now Dupre knew that
Gartagmalem offered
him a Daemon's
bargain, one which
could easily lead to the
utter destruction of a
man of Honor like
himself. At the same
time, he could not
stand idly by and see
the honest innkeeper
ruined, nor could he
oppose the whole
Gargoyle company
alone. Most
importantly, perhaps,
it would not be fully
Honorable to refuse to
forfeit after fighting
under those terms. He
could only hope that
time would provide a
means of escape. "I
will accept your
terms, sir," he said,
and there he knelt and
presented his sword to
the mocking brigand.

So he went to live with
the Gargoyles, and he
drilled and trained
them. He found that
while Gargoyles were
both mighty and
courageous, they had
little mastery of

concerted tactics or strategy, but they quickly grasped the fundamentals of both. He also learned that it was futile to try and hold back knowledge from his command, for under the watchful eye of their leader, any usefull hidden expertise was soon sniffed out and analyzed, and presented to all.

Nor could Dupre Honorably refuse when Gartagmalem proposed that they try out their new skills against brigands, pirates or Goblin bands, for Dupre had only sworn to stand apart from his actions against the subjects of Lord British. So he fought alongside the Gargoyles, and saw his teachings tested by fire.

But at last the dread day came, and Gartagmalem announced that they would attack a walled town, with the garrison of King's soldiers stationed in it. This was a stronger objective than the Gargoyles had ever assayed befure, but Dupre knew that they